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Garth Ennis Russ Braun Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

FIFTY-ONE

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Garth Ennis Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

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In a world where costumed heroes soar through the sky and masked vigilantes prowl the night, someone's got to make sure the "supes" don't get out of line. And someone will.

Billy Butcher, Wee Hughie, Mother's Milk, The Frenchman and The Female are The Boys: a CIA-backed team of very dangerous people, each one dedicated to the struggle against the most lethal force on Earth- superpower. Some superheroes have to be watched. Some have to be controlled. And some of them- sometimes- need to be taken out of the picture.

That's when you call in **The Boys**.

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HOW'S THE PINOT?

RANCID. HOW'S PAKISTAN?

SEE ABOVE.

THE GOVERNMENT'S JUST ABOUT HOLDING IT TOGETHER. OBVIOUSLY THEY'RE NOT TOO POPULAR FOR LETTING US GO HUNTING IN THE NORTH, BUT WE MAKE IT WORTH THEIR WHILE.

I KNOW. I'VE SEEN THE CHECKS.

YOU HAVE TO HAND IT TO THE PRESIDENT, IT'S A BRILLIANT IDEA: PAY THEM TO LET US INVADE. AND ALL THESE UNDESIRABLES WE SPIRIT AWAY TO ALASKA, THAT DOESN'T HURT THE RELATIONSHIP EITHER.

"ENEMY COMBATANT", THAT'S A PRETTY BIG NET, ISN'T IT?

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND. THE GENUINE ARTICLE DOES TEND TO MAKE IT ACROSS TO AFGHANISTAN IN IRRITATINGLY LARGE NUMBERS, BUT I THINK STAYING OUT WAS THE RIGHT DECISION. THAT PLACE JUST SWALLOWS ARMIES.

IN THAT CASE, THE NOTION OF IRAQ MUST GIVE YOU A SPECIAL LITTLE TINGLE...

COME ON, THAT WAS NEVER ON THE CARDS, WAS IT?

OUR OTHER HOST WAS VERY KEEN FOR A WHILE. OR HIS KEEPERS WERE, AT ANY RATE.

YES, I'M SURE THEY WERE. "CAPES OVER BAGHDAD". BY THE WAY, I HAVE A QUESTION.

MM?

WHY ALL THIS FOR THAT?

AH.

WELL, IT WOULD APPEAR THEIR RANKS ARE SWELLING. AND THIS MIGHT AMUSE YOU, IT'S YOUR ADVENTURE IN THE LAND OF THE I.E.D. THAT'S LARGELY RESPONSIBLE.

OH, OF COURSE. *ADVANCES IN BATTLEFIELD MEDICINE,* THAT'S THE PHRASE I KEEP HEARING.

YOU KNOW, I SEE SOME OF THESE TRUNKS WITH HEADS BEING CARRIED OFF THE MEDEVACS, AND I CAN'T HELP THINKING...WELL.

I'M NOT SURE OF THE EXACT FIGURES, BUT I BELIEVE THEY'RE NOW SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A CROSS-SECTION AND A COMMUNITY. SO WHEN A PARTICULARLY PRETTY ONE POPS UP IN AN ELECTION YEAR...

YOU KNOW, I WAS WONDERING WHY I'D BEEN INVITED TONIGHT, BUT IT'S STARTING TO MAKE A KIND OF WRETCHED SENSE. ARE YOU AWARE THERE'S A MOVEMENT AFOOT TO LET THEM INTO THE SERVICES?

WHAT?

WOMEN AND HOMOS I JUST ABOUT GET--HELL, I CAN EVEN MAKE USE OF THEM, SO LONG AS THEY CAN CARRY A RIFLE. BUT THIS IS INSANITY.

DAKOTA BOB DOES IT AGAIN, TWO BIRDS WITH ONE GODDAMNED STONE...

HHHH. WHAT WAS WRONG WITH GOOD OLD RECYCLED MARYLAND HILL TRASH?

ALL RIGHT?

DON'T WORRY, SUNSHINE. NOT YOUR TURN.

SMALLER FISH TO FRY TONIGHT.

MS. BRAND...?

YES?

HEH HEH *HEHNN--!*

AH... CAN I HELP YOU?

OH, I THINK SO, YES. I THINK SO.

MY NAME'S DIRECTOR KESSLER, *HEHHNN,* I'M A VERY IMPORTANT MAN...

I'M SORRY, DIRECTOR OF WHAT?

I'VE...ALWAYS ADMIRED YOU FROM AFAR...

PARDON ME?

I SAW YOU IN MOSCOW, OH YES. I WATCHED YOU TAKE THE GOLD IN SINGAPORE.

I WATCHED YOU AT THE PARTY TONIGHT AND, AND I KNEW THIS WAS MEANT TO BE. BEING SO CLOSE TO YOU AT LAST, I...I JUST CAN'T FIGHT IT ANY LONGER...

IT'S-- *DESTINY--!*

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HHEEEEEHHHNNNNHHH!!

HEY!

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--

I WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO YOUR LITTLE BROKEN BODY!

WHAT?!

I WANT TO LICK THE PUS FROM YOUR BEDSORES!

I DON'T *HAVE* BEDSORES! GOD, WHAT KIND OF CRAZY PERSON ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

THERE'S A MAN, A MAN, HE KICKED ME SO MUCH MY JUNK DOESN'T WORK! THAT'S HOW I UNDERSTAND YOU, DARLING, THAT'S HOW I KNOW YOUR PAIN!

THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO USE *THIS!!*

BUT WE'LL OVERCOME IT, NIKKI--WE'LL DO IT *TOGETHER,* WON'T WE--?

GOD, YOU'VE ALREADY OVERCOME SO *MUCH--*

BUUHHH!

HNNHH!

YOU DISGUSTING LITTLE REPTILE I'LL SHOW *YOU* WHAT

HELLO? I SAID I WANTED HOTEL SEC--

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MA'AM.

I HEARD RAISED VOICES.

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?

HE WAS?

MY GOD.

COINCIDENCE, ACTUALLY, BECAUSE I'M LOOKING AT HIS PROFILE RIGHT NOW. WHAT THERE IS OF IT.

NO, WE NEVER HAD MUCH LUCK IN THAT REGARD.

M.I.5 MUST HAVE MOVED AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT...

Butcher, W

I'M GUESSING THAT THE FILE WAS SEALED THE INSTANT MALLORY CALLED THEM BACK. PROBABLY HANDED IT OVER ALONG WITH THE SUBJECT, GLAD TO SEE THE BACK OF BOTH.

I WOULD IMAGINE THE SAME THING HAPPENED WITH CAMPBELL, AS SOON AS BUTCHER TOOK AN INTEREST.

HMH. IT'S NOT A MILLION MILES FROM THE WAY OUR RESPONSE TEAMS OPERATE, IS IT?

ONCE THEY GET THE SCRAMBLE ORDER, I MEAN. AND THE OBJECTIVE'S THE SAME, TOO, IT'S ALL ABOUT RECRUITMENT.

YOU KNOW, IT OCCURS TO ME THAT WE SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE ***SURVIVORS*** OF SOME OF THESE INCIDENTS; IF WE'D KEPT AN EYE ON CAMPBELL AFTER THE THING WITH A-TRAIN, WE MIGHT HAVE SAVED OURSELVES A LOT OF TROUBLE...

THAT IS AN EXCELLENT POINT, AND I SUGGEST YOU IMPLEMENT A PROCEDURE.

BUT WHAT ABOUT RIGHT NOW, YES. SORRY.

THE C.I.A. FILES MUST BE HARD COPIES, NOT ONE SINGLE ATTEMPT ON THEIR MAINFRAME HAS COME UP WITH ANYTHING. KAWANISHI WE CAN'T EVEN GET AT, THEY CAN AFFORD A PROPER FIREWALL.

AND THE FRENCHMAN...WELL, THERE'S NO EVIDENCE OF A CATASTROPHE IN HIS BACKGROUND AT ALL. IT'S ALMOST AS IF THEY STUMBLED ACROSS HIM BY ACCIDENT.

THE ONLY ONE WE *DO* HAVE A FILE ON, COURTESY OF HIS FATHER'S VARIOUS LAWSUITS...

WE DISCOUNTED ACTION AGAINST HIS MOTHER SOME TIME AGO. A GLANCE AT THE LAMPLIGHTER'S WEBCAM SHOULD TELL YOU WHY.

YOU'RE STILL COVERING OLD GROUND, BY THE WAY.

I KNOW.

ALL RIGHT, HERE IT IS. YOU SAID THAT NO ONE'S EVER MANAGED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE BOYS. AND SO THEY AND THE SEVEN HAVE REMAINED LOCKED INTO THEIR...TRUCE.

WHAT I'M WONDERING IS--

WHY DON'T WE SIMPLY USE THEM ON EACH OTHER?

HELLO...?

I'M LISTENING.

YOU SAID THAT ONCE THE NEXT STAGE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, WE CAN DO AWAY WITH THE COLORFUL COSTUME STUFF. SO WHAT YOU'RE ENVISAGING IS A TIME WHEN WE DON'T NEED THE SEVEN.

WHICH IS STILL SOME WAY OFF...

HEAR ME OUT.

I HAD KENT'S PEOPLE WRITE A SIMULATION PROGRAM FOR ME. I HAVEN'T RUN IT YET.

IT HYPOTHESIZES A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SEVEN AND THE BOYS. POINTS ARE AWARDED NOT JUST FOR EACH COMBATANT'S PHYSICAL STRENGTH, BUT ALSO FOR INTELLIGENCE, RESOURCEFULNESS ACCORDING TO WHAT WE'VE SEEN IN THE PAST, EXPERIENCE IN TACTICS--AND SO ON. THE LATTER ASPECTS BEING WHERE BUTCHER'S PEOPLE SCORE HIGHEST, OF COURSE.

YOU SEE, TO PUT IT IN THE CRUDEST TERMS, WE ALREADY KNOW WHO'LL WIN IN A FIGHT. WHAT THIS'LL TELL US IS THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE CONFRONTATION WE'RE *ACTUALLY LIKELY TO SEE*...

POINTS MAKES IT SOUND LIKE SOME KIND OF ROLE PLAYING GAME. I THOUGHT THE GEEK MINDSET WAS NOT ONE TO BE INDULGED?

IT HAS ITS PLACE.

LOOK, I REALLY BELIEVE THIS IS WORTH DOING, THE PROGRAM IS EXHAUSTIVELY COMPREHENSIVE...

ALL RIGHT, RUN IT.

GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE ALREADY MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR AUTONOMY, MS. BRADLEY.

GOODNIGHT.

HUH.

UH... UUHHHH...?

BLOODY HELL! MONKEY!

AAH--NAAH-- WH-WH-WH-WH--?

JESUS, WHAT A STATE TO GET INTO...!

I MEAN SHE SAID SHE RESTRAINED YOU, I DIDN'T THINK SHE'D TIED YOU DOWN WITH YER Y-FRONTS ROUND YER ANKLES AN' STUCK A DILDO UP YER ARSE...

IS... SHE...?

RELAX, SON, I MANAGED TO CALM HER DOWN. PUT ON ME CRAP YANK ACCENT AN' FLASHED ME I.D., TOLD HER I WAS SECRET SERVICE.

SHE'S IN THE BAR HAVIN' A BRANDY. DON'T WORRY, IT'S ON ME.

YOU'RE BLOODY LUCKY I CHANCED BY, REALLY. IF THIS EVER GOT OUT, WELL, I DREAD TO THINK WHAT'D HAPPEN.

WHAT DID YOU TELL HER...?

I SAID YOU'RE A REPUBLICAN SENATOR'S BROTHER WHO'S OFF HIS MEDS. YOU KEEP GETTIN' INTO TROUBLE AN' THE FAMILY HAS TO COVER IT UP.

BROKE YER MUM'S HEART, YOU HAVE. I MENTIONED THEY'RE NEVER DONE PRAYIN' FOR YOU, THAT ALWAYS GOES DOWN WELL WITH THE RED-STATERS.

LIBERAL MEDIA WOULD LOVE THIS... ADMINISTRATION COULD TAKE A SERIOUS HIT...I WASN'T HALF BAD, IF I SAY SO MESELF. I'LL SEND YOU THE TAPE FOR A LISTEN.

OH, GOD. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

WELL, LET'S GET RID O' THIS, BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER--

OOOOHH--!

THERE.

YOU'RE GONNA BE A GOOD LITTLE C.I.A. DIRECTOR, AIN'T YOU? THERE'S NOT GONNA BE ANY MORE OLD BOLLOCKS ABOUT EXPENSES OR ANY O' THAT.

...OKAY...

AN' YOU ***AIN'T*** GONNA COME INTO MY OFFICE AN' TRY AN' MAKE A CUNT O' ME AGAIN. THAT'S A DEFINITE NO-NO, MONKEY, THAT REALLY DID PISS ME OFF.

AS A MATTER O' FACT, JUST WHILE I'VE GOT YOU...TERROR?

WUFF!

TERROR, MATE.

FUCK IT...!

EVENIN', RAYNER.

WHAT THE FUCK ARE *YOU* DOING--

AH, YOU KNOW. JUST IN TOWN FOR SOME FUN AN' GAMES.

BUT THAT ALWAYS HAS TO STOP, SOONER OR LATER.

AN' YOU'VE GOTTA GET DOWN TO SERIOUS BUSINESS.

YOU GET OUT OF MY OFFICE RIGHT NOW OR I WILL FUCKING SHOOT YOU DEAD.

BIT EXTREME, INNIT?

FUCK YOU--!

MIND YOU, MOVIN' MONKEY UP JUST TO PISS ME OFF, GOD ALONE KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF...

FUCK YOU, YOU EVIL COCKSUCKER, THE LAST TIME YOU CAME HERE YOU SAID YOU'D KILL MY CHILDREN!

I AM GOING TO COUNT TO FIVE, AND IF YOU'RE NOT GONE BY THEN--

I SWEAR TO CHRIST I WILL *EMPTY THIS GODDAMN THING...!*

THERE'S TROUBLE COMIN'.

I DUNNO IF IT'S VOUGHT OR THE SUPES TOGETHER OR SEPARATE, BUT IT'S COMIN'.

DON'T--

VOUGHT HAVE RED RIVER PEOPLE INSIDE THE SECURITY DETAIL. DAKOTA BOB DON'T KNOW WHO'S WHO, AN' HE AIN'T DONE NOTHIN' FOR THE SAME REASON YOU'RE SO FUCKIN' PARALYSED: HE DON'T WANNA SET OFF A CONFRONTATION.

HOMELANDER'S BEEN TALKIN' TO PEOPLE, TOO. STIRRIN' THE SHIT. GATHERIN' THE CLANS.

THINK IT MIGHT BE TIME THAT YOU AN' BOB FACED FACTS?

I'LL BE GONE IN LESS THAN A MONTH...

SO WILL HALF THE EASTERN SEABOARD, IF THESE CUNTS HAVE TO BE STOPPED THE HARD WAY.

COME ON--!

NO? THE G-MEN WERE ONE THING; IMAGINE EVERY SUPE COMIN' AT YOU AT ONCE IN A ***COORDINATED ATTACK.*** POWER ON, SHIELDS UP, ALL THAT BOLLOCKS.

NO ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ON THIS ONE, RAYNER. HOW FAR'S D.U. AMMO LIKELY TO TAKE YOU THEN?

NOW.

WE ALL KNOW COMPOUND V BOOSTS BRAIN CHEMISTRY, THAT'S WHAT GIVES THE SUPES CONTROL OVER THEIR ABILITIES. THE EXACT DETAILS AIN'T SO WELL-KNOWN, BUT WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO IS INCREASIN' THE STRENGTH O' THE NEURONS--***AND,*** IT TURNS OUT, THE SIGNAL THEY GIVE OFF WHEN THEY FIRE.

TO THE POINT THAT THEY CAN BE DETECTED. HOMED IN ON.

2002

BY A RADAR-GUIDED MISSILE, IF YOU ADAPT IT PROPERLY.

SORTA THING YOU MIGHT STICK UNDER AN F-16.

HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW THIS?

JONAH VOGELBAUM NOTICED IT ORIGINALLY. LOT MORE WORK'S BEEN DONE SINCE.

BY WHOM?

WHY ARE YOU GIVING THIS TO *ME*...?

WELL, YOU PASS IT ON TO THE AIR FORCE, IN TIME FOR THEM TO GET TOOLED UP FOR...WHATEVER IT IS... YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A LOT O' MATES WHEN YOU MAKE YER RUN FOR THE SENATE.

I'M GONNA NEED YOU WHEREVER YOU END UP. WHICH LET'S FACE IT, AIN'T EVER GONNA BE FAR FROM THE DRIVIN' SEAT.

I MEAN HOW MUCH USE IS *MONKEY* GONNA BE TO ME, REALLY?

YOU TOLD ME...

COME ON. I WAS ROYALLY FUCKED OFF, BUT I AIN'T GONNA KILL ANYONE'S KIDS.

THAT'S YOUR GAME, REMEMBER?

WHAT?

THE GLENLIVET
12

THIS-- MM--
IT MAKES SENSE, INASMUCH AS I'M ABLE TO FOLLOW THE TECHNICAL JARGON. I SUPPOSE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ME HOW YOU GOT IT?

NO.
OKAY.

ABOUT... AFGHANISTAN.

THE DAY WE FIRST MET. WHEN NEWS OF THE AIRSTRIKES WAS COMING IN.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE MISTAKEN SIMPLE RELIEF FOR ACTUAL EUPHORIA.

YOU WERE RIGHT THAT WE HAD THE B-52s CROSS THE BORDER. WE GAVE THEM SPECIFIC TARGETS OUTSIDE THE WARZONE IN PAKISTAN.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW IS THAT FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER, I'D BEEN IN THOSE SELFSAME PLACES.

I WAS A FIELD OFFICER THEN. GOD, I WASN'T EVEN THAT LONG OUT OF CORNELL.

I WON'T SAY WHAT I WAS DOING IN THE KORENGAL VALLEY, BUT MY TEAM VISITED QUITE A FEW OF THE VILLAGES. I WORE MY BURQA. TALKED TO THE WIVES AND PLAYED WITH THE KIDS.

THE LOOKS THEY GAVE ME, A WOMAN WITH AN A.K.S.U. OVER HER SHOULDER...

I FELT LIKE FUCKING CALAMITY JANE.

JESUS, THOSE KIDS WERE AMAZING.

YOU KNOW... GIVEN OUR MUSLIM BROTHERS' PROPENSITY FOR STICKING IT INTO YOUNG PUSSY...

THE STRIKES I ORDERED PROBABLY TOOK OUT THE CHILDREN OF THE CHILDREN I HELD.

BUT THE FACT IS, WE DO DIRTY WORK TO KEEP THE WORLD CLEAN. WE TAKE THAT BURDEN ON OURSELVES AND WE EXPECT NO THANKS.

AND IF WE'RE TO GO ON DOING THAT, IF WE'RE TO PUT OURSELVES IN PLACES WERE WE CAN DO THE MOST GOOD, WE ***CAN'T*** HAVE ARRANGEMENTS FROM THE PAST COMING BACK TO COMPROMISE US. SO WE CLEAN HOUSE.

AND WE RATIONALIZE IT. I FREELY ADMIT THAT. WE COMPARTMENTALIZE IT IN OUR MINDS... AS...

FARAWAY BROWN PEOPLE.

YES.

IT'S HOW EVERYONE DEALS WITH THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN. BECAUSE OF US BEING THERE.

A SUICIDE BOMBER DRIVES INTO A MARKET.

SOME MARINE GETS SCARED HE'S NEXT, SO HE CUTS A SCHOOL BUS IN HALF WITH FIFTY CAL.

TIME TO GO, MATE.

YOU...

ONCE TOLD ME WE DESERVED EACH OTHER.

NO ONE DESERVES ME, LUV.

PROBABLY BEST IF YOU STICK TO THE PHONE FROM NOW ON. OR EMAIL.

WHAT...?

WELL, COME ON. LANGLEY'S ONE THING, BUT YOU AIN'T GONNA WANT THE LIKES O' ME DROPPIN' BY WHEN YOU'RE ON CAPITOL HILL, ARE YOU?

COME ON, TERROR.

OFF WE GO, MATE.

...DO YOU HAVE TO GO?

RIGHT THIS MOMENT, I MEAN?

UH... NAH.

S'POSE NOT.

AFTER ALL, WHAT'S THE RUSH, EH?

REC!

2.

The intention was to utilize up to four audio devices and two video. In the event, none of these was successfully emplaced, or, if they were emplaced, successfully activated.

No signal was ever received from any of the devices. Interrogation of the personnel concerned was not possible.

The first indication of mission failure came when operative B landed on the car of team two (surveillance/back-up), after a ten storey drop following presumed defenestration. Death was later concluded by autopsy to have been instantaneous.

The other operatives of team one (entry/emplacement) were not heard from again, nor has any trace of them been found since the mission. It is important to note that team two's operatives received no transmissions from team one after the initial entry, suggesting that the critical point in the mission timeline occurred suddenly and without warning.

During debriefing, operative E of team two pointed out that subjects four ("The Frenchman") and five ("The Female") had not been observed leaving the target building after the hours of darkness, unless accompanied by or later joining subjects one-three for specific activity. It was therefore concluded that subjects four and five both reside on the premises, a probability later confirmed by long range surveillance.

What happened to all remaining team one personnel now seems clear. Further attempts to close-surveil location bravo have been suspended, pending enhanced development of mission-specific techniques.

NB: greater coordination between initial surveillance and entry teams is recommended.

SIMULATION COMPLETE

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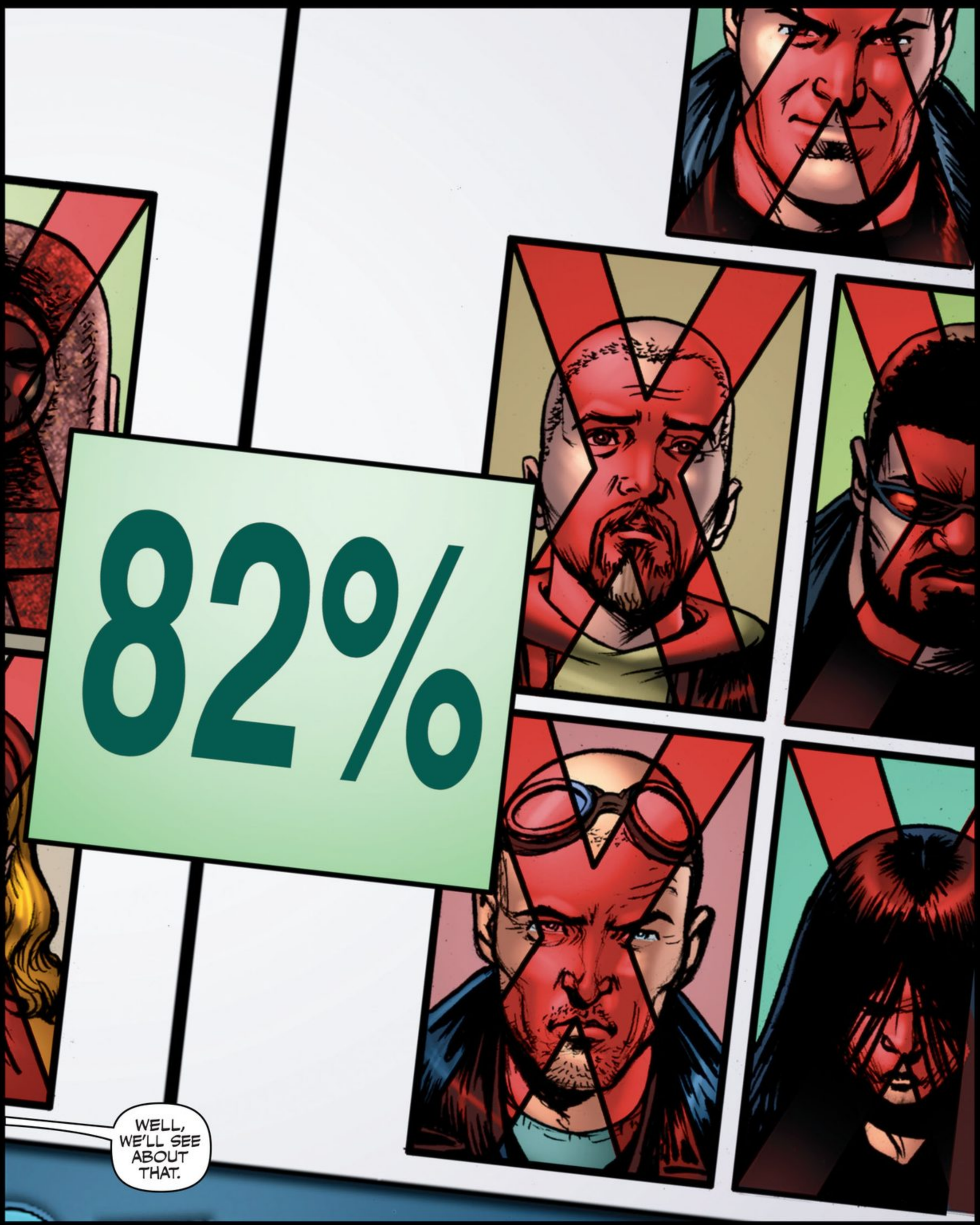

PROPER PREPARATION AND PLANNING

conclusion